

ENTEP MEETING AND EXPERTS MEETING

COORDINATION NOTES

ENTEP Conference 01/2023

Portugal March 22 – March 25 2023



1 INTRODUCTION

The first ENTEP Conference following the advent of the pandemic caused by the virus known as SARS-CoV-2 took place in Lisbon with the support of DGAE. During the coordination meeting, the Coordination Notes were reviewed and approved. A comprehensive discussion ensued on the conference programme, with necessary adjustments being made to the conference proceedings.

Subsequently, various organizational aspects were discussed, which will be further examined during the ENTEP Conference. These include the following: firstly, the reactivation of representatives from EU member states, who are currently adopting a more passive role; secondly, the distribution of ENTEP membership cards; thirdly, the upcoming change in ENTEP coordination; and fourthly, the next ENTEP Conference in Prague.

The primary focus of the discussion was the exchange of information regarding current developments in individual countries, with a particular emphasis on the experiences of the participants with the challenges posed by the pandemic and the repercussions of the Ukraine situation on respective education systems. Additionally, there was intensive discussion on the topic of enhancing the attractiveness of the teaching profession.

Finally, the conference saw the formulation of expectations for its outcomes and the establishment of agreements regarding further cooperation.

2 20+ Years of ENTEP, ITE – Challenges for the near Future: Redesign for ITE Study Programmes (both contents and methodologies) – case studies

The conference commenced with a welcome address by the German representative and ENTEP coordinator, Dr. Daniela Worek, from the Hessian Teacher Academy. Following this, the (new) members were introduced and general information about the ENTEP conference was discussed. Thereafter, the announced presentations were conducted. The presented contents are accessible via the ENTEP website under the following link: https://www.entep.eu/conferences_details.php?Conference_FID=65

Keynote Lecture: Teachers Well-being – a real ITE demand?

- “Teachers Well-being – a real ITE demand?”

Dr. Fernando Alexandre, Directorate-General for School Administration, ITE Expert

Redesign for ITE Study Programmes (both contents and methodologies) – case studies

- “An ongoing reform of initial teacher education and training in the Czech Republic, 2021-2023”
Kateřina Dufková & Bořkovec Matouš + Czech Republic
- “Reform of Initial Teacher Education in BEFR”
Michèle Mombeek + Belgium
- “Initial Teacher Education in Poland”
Prof. Dr. Joanna Madalińska-Michalak + Poland
- “National Institute for Teacher Training”
Dr. Christian Lamy + Luxembourg

3 Country Reports on Teacher Education

Czech Republic:

At present, there is an absence of a standardised regulation that determines the number of ECTS credits that correspond to the number of hours spent in practical teaching. The Czech Republic has expressed its intention to establish a fixed standard in this regard.

Enhancing the Attractiveness of the Profession:

- The discrepancy in salaries when compared to other professions requiring similar levels of education is a salient issue.
- A 50% salary increase has led to a greater interest in the profession; however, many teachers continue to work part-time.
- A new reform framework is currently being developed.

Portugal:

Teachers are exclusively assigned to subjects and school levels for which they have been formally trained. The allocation of teachers is determined by subject expertise, school level, experience, seniority, grades, and accumulated teaching days.

A notable proportion of teacher educators are drawn from the field of psychology rather than education.

Private universities are also involved in teacher education.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD): Teachers are required to complete 50 hours of CPD within a four-year period. This training is mandatory and essential for career progression.

Belgium:

High rates of attrition have been observed in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and during the early years of teaching.

Digital Tools: Integration and practical application in education remain key challenges.

There has been an increase in collaboration between colleges and universities in teacher education.

Research indicates that educational reforms are only likely to engender significant change within schools when they are closely linked to ITE.

The transition from a Bachelor's degree (180 ECTS) to a Master's degree (60 ECTS) now applies to all school levels.

A language proficiency test is now mandatory at the commencement of the programme in French; failure to pass this test will require the successful completion of an additional five ECTS credits beyond the standard 60.

Furthermore, educational transitions, particularly from preschool to primary school and from primary to secondary school, have been revised to address existing difficulties.

The training of multidisciplinary teachers for preschool and primary education is now underway.

Poland:

Teacher training is also conducted at accredited private universities, with accreditation being reviewed on a quinquennial basis.

The ongoing reform of teacher education is a key priority.

While the primary objective is the quality of the teaching force, policymakers often overlook the dynamic factors influencing students' career decisions. Such factors include the duration of education, future earnings potential, and working conditions after graduation.

Research-based profession: Both Bachelor's and Master's programmes require a thesis.

Teachers are expected to develop strong diagnostic skills, particularly for early childhood education.

The hiring decisions of school leadership teams are determined through consultation with faculty members.

Luxembourg:

The implementation of diverse learning arrangements (Marche de Pédagogique) is a notable feature. The "Teachers are Learners" programme places significant emphasis on the implementation of train-the-trainer initiatives.

A further key consideration is the recognition of children as stakeholders in their own right.

The National Institute for Teacher Training (Ifen) considers students to be key stakeholders in education.

Teacher Support and Training:

Ifen provides complimentary Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities and covers 50% of the costs for teachers attending external training programs.

Furthermore, Ifen adopts selected external programs and offers them at no cost. Free coaching services are available, provided by approximately 80 advisors from across Europe. The organisation's motto encapsulates its commitment to its teachers: "We are here for you, dear teacher."

Teacher Salaries in the European Union:

The absence of a uniform salary regulation for teachers across the European Union gives rise to considerable variations between countries. In some nations, teachers across different school levels receive equal or at least similar salaries.

Examples include: Finland, for instance, has implemented a system that ensures equal remuneration across various school levels. Similar systems are in place in other Nordic countries, including Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, as well as in Portugal, Poland, and the Czech Republic. Germany, on the other hand, has seen a more fragmented approach, with 15 of its federal states implementing or in the process of implementing salary adjustments to harmonise pay across school levels.

Generally, teacher salaries increase with years of experience and seniority.

4 Recommendations to Increase the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession

There are a number of approaches that may be adopted in order to enhance the attractiveness of the teaching profession. These measures have the potential to attract more talented individuals to the profession and ensure that all students have access to high-quality education. The following section will present the outcomes aimed at enhancing the appeal of the teaching profession:

- **Improve working conditions:** Teaching can be a demanding job, and improving working conditions can help to make it a more attractive career choice. This could include reducing class sizes, providing resources and materials to support instruction, and ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment.
- **Increase compensation:** One reason for the shortage of teachers is the lack of competitive salaries and benefits compared to other professions. One of the most important factors in attracting individuals to the teaching profession is compensation. Offering competitive salaries and benefits, such as health care, retirement plans, civil servant status, and paid leave, can help to make teaching a more attractive career choice.
- **Offer incentives for teaching in high-need areas:** Certain regions or subjects may have a higher demand for teachers than others. Offering incentives such as bonuses or loan forgiveness to teachers who work in these areas could encourage more people to consider teaching in those locations.
- **Well-being and professional satisfaction:** This pillar highlights the importance of promoting the well-being and job satisfaction of teachers. This includes improving working conditions, addressing teacher burnout, and celebrating the contributions of teachers to society.
- **Refreshing the image of teachers in society:** Teachers are an essential part of our society, and highlighting their contributions and impact can help to raise the attractiveness of the profession. This could include promoting successful teachers and their accomplishments, celebrating teacher appreciation week, and improving the portrayal of teachers in media. #Respect
- **Increase funding for Initial Teacher Education and development:** Providing more funding for Initial Teacher Education and development programs could help to increase the quality and quantity of teachers available. This could include funding for mentorship programs, professional development workshops, and ongoing training opportunities.

- **Provide opportunities for professional growth:** Teachers who feel supported in their professional development are more likely to feel satisfied with their careers. Providing opportunities for ongoing professional development and growth, such as mentorship programs, conferences, and workshops, can help to make teaching a more attractive career choice.

- **Strengthening teachers' professionalism and autonomy:** Expanding teacher autonomy and promoting teachers' professionalism can be achieved through providing opportunities for professional development, encouraging innovation in teaching methods, and increasing decision-making power in the classroom.

- **Mobility / Career Opportunities:** It is essential to provide teachers with more diverse career opportunities to keep them engaged and interested in the profession. One way to achieve this is to offer roles such as scientific researchers. By doing so, teachers can gain experience in a range of areas related to education, including research, curriculum design, and teacher education. This approach can help to promote the reflective practitioner model, which emphasizes the importance of teachers reflecting on their own teaching practices to improve their effectiveness in the classroom. This can help teachers to develop new skills, and gain a broader perspective on the field of education and bridge the gap between theory and practice at the same time. By expanding career opportunities for teachers in this way, we can help to create a more dynamic and engaged teaching workforce. Alternative pathways for teachers to enter the profession should be developed as a valuable opportunity for enrichment, rather than being seen as a last resort.

Overall, raising the attractiveness of the teaching profession will require a concerted effort to improve compensation and working conditions, provide opportunities for professional growth, enhance the public image of teaching, and expand teacher autonomy. It is important to plan teacher education through long-term strategies and forward-thinking, rather than just using quick fixes to address immediate issues. Instead of simply reacting to problems, stakeholders / teacher educators should take a proactive approach by considering trends and statistics to prepare for the future. Schools must be equipped to prepare students for the world ahead, and that requires a well-trained teaching workforce. By implementing long-term planning and strategies, we can address the lack of teachers in many areas. Concepts such as alternative career entry for teachers should be designed as a genuine enrichment, rather than a last resort. This approach can help to ensure a sustainable and qualified teaching workforce for the future.

Conclusions

It is evident from the proceedings of this conference that certain Member States are encountering a pronounced deficit of teaching professionals. Moreover, the teaching profession appears to have diminished in esteem in numerous Member States, resulting in the recurrent utilisation of the term "semi-profession".

This has led to criticism of the recruitment of career changers and individuals with non-teaching backgrounds who have not undergone extensive training and experience, which some deem to imply that "anyone can be a teacher".

This phenomenon is particularly problematic at a time when the demands on teachers are considerable and there is a pressing need for authentic role models and agents of change.

In this context, some Member States have reported relatively low interest in Teacher Education and a problem of young teachers leaving the profession, even directly after Initial Teacher Education, as in the case of the Czech Republic. Consequently, there is a constant emphasis on the necessity to enhance the conditions for teachers, with a particular focus on the Initial Teacher Education and the initial years in the profession of future teachers.

4 Miscellaneous and Outlook

The forthcoming ENTEP conference is scheduled to be held in Prague, with a projected date range of 6th to 8th November 2023. (The presentations will be available on: https://www.entep.eu/conferences_details.php?Conference_FID=65)

Dr. Daniela Worek,
Coordinator and German representative

Lisbon, 30th March 2023